

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting
Boise, Idaho

March 14, 2005

Board Members Present: Robin Lohnes, Renee Taylor, Dr. Vernon Dooley, Hilleary Bogley, Gary Zakotnik, and Dr. Wayne Burkhardt. Board Members Absent: Bill Higham, Dr. Joseph Merriam, and Larry Johnson. Washington Office and BLM Staff: Tom Dyer, DAD, Renewable Resources and Planning, Jeff Rawson, Don Glenn, Sally Spencer, EK James, Dean Bolstad, and Ramona DeLorme. Ann Aldrich, Associate State Director of Eastern States. Idaho State Office: K Lynn Bennett, State Director; Tom Miles, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist. USDA, Forest Service Representative: Toni Strauss.

K Lynn Bennett welcomed the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board to the State of Idaho. He recalled some of the history of the Wild Horse and Burro program, emphasizing the principles of effective wild horse and burro management and expressed satisfaction in the successful management of the program in Idaho.

Tom Miles, Wild Horse and Burro State Lead for Idaho, provided a more detail of the management of the Wild Horse and Burro program. This success is due to the creation of a team, drawing on the talent of field personnel across the State, of which they are very proud.

Jeff Rawson introduced the BLM Washington staff.

November 2004 Minutes

The November 8, 2004, minutes were approved after the correction on page 2, "...will expire June 2005."; should be June 2006.

2005 Nominations Update

Jeff noted that there has been no formal action as yet from the BLM. He expects approval should be within a month.

Update Pending Litigation

There is no new litigation. The Fund for Animals lawsuit is still in appeals. The judge ruled in favor of BLM; but the Fund for Animals is appealing the decision.

FY05 Gather Schedule

Dean Bolstad updated the Board on the gather schedule. There are 54 of 201 Herd Management Areas (HMAs) scheduled for removals, with 9,796 animals to be removed. Since October 1, 2004, 27 HMAs have been gathered.

FY 05 Adoptions

Dean Bolstad reviewed the adoption statistics for FY05 by each state and compared FY04 adoption numbers to FY05 numbers for October 1 through February 28. Overall, it was noted that the adoptions are down by 600 animals with notable decreases in Oregon, Eastern States, Idaho and Nevada; but Colorado's adoption numbers increased. New Mexico and California's numbers were nearly the same as last year. He noted Oregon's decrease is attributed to the Kigers being available in FY04, Eastern States have had less animals adopted per event held in FY05, and that Montana and Idaho had not gathered local horses in FY05 and had not had any adoptions. Colorado's adoptions increased due to a popular local HMA's animals being available for adoption. It was also noted that there are less burros available for adoption and that 200 more were adopted during this time period in FY04. A discussion followed as to why the adoptions were low in Nevada. Nevada adopts most of their animals through their prison training system and animals adopted at Palomino Valley are not included in Nevada's adoption numbers. Eastern States to have decreased the number of horses transported to some adoptions to balance supply with anticipated adoption demand and save transportation costs for numbers not being adopted. During the adoption discussion, it was noted that one office in Eastern States felt that in general there is a 75% adoption rate no matter how many horses are brought to the adoption. It was also noted that the late winter hay costs (\$200/ton) in some areas may be one of the reasons why adoptions are lower.

Facility Reports

Dean Bolstad updated the Board on capacities and current numbers at facilities. The Short-Term Holding facility capacity is 12,345; there are 9,184 horses as of February 28, 2005. The capacity for Long-Term Holding is 20,600; there are currently 15,416 horses. Because of the new sale authority, the age of the horses in captivity is of interest. Number of animals according to age in Short-Term and Long-Term Holding was reviewed:

Ages	Short-Term Holding	Long-Term Holding
0-5	6,600	2,500
6-10	800	5,800
Older 10	600	7,200
Unmarked Animals	100	0
Animals to 3 Events	70	50
Burros		
0-5	90	
6-10	40	
older 10	0	

Research Update

Dean Bolstad reviewed the status of the research updates which included:

- Fertility Control
- Individual Animal Based Studies
- Population Based Studies
- Fruend's Modified Adjuvant Study
- 3-4 year PZP Agent Development
- Census

It was noted that at the completion of the 3-4 year fertility control trials the mares would be moved to long-term holding facilities. Discussion arose about how the expenditures are split between BLM and Biological Research Division (BRD). BLM is funding the 3-4 year fertility control study. The Board inquired as to the amount of BRD funding for FY05. The Board expressed concern about research census flights taking place during foaling season. It was stated that the Forward Infrared study will be done at high elevation with little or no disruption to the animals.

Dean followed up on a question raised by the Board at the November, 2004 meeting concerning why BLM had not taken advantage of an offer from the Air Force to utilize military technology to census wild horses and burros. About 7 years ago the military suggested that they might be able to assist with census, but later withdrew the offer.

APHIS Agreement

Don Glenn gave an overview of the APHIS Agreement which was signed last month (February, 2005). BLM has obligated \$300,000 toward the agreement. BLM also has an APHIS veterinarian on the Research Committee. The work plan for FY05 truly represents the 12-month year. The agreement is for five years, until FY2009. Dr. Jay Merriam has been kept up-to-date on the agreement. BLM will be getting quarterly reports from Dr. Al Kane.

Forest Service Agreement

Don Glenn noted that the Forest Service Agreement was signed by BLM February, 2005 and BLM is waiting for the Forest Service to sign. The Forest Service would like to meet with BLM, in regards to sale authority, to discuss how it will affect the agreement and how it will affect their horses that fall under the sale authority.

Forest Service Update

Toni Strauss gave the Board an update on the Forest Service wild horse program's gathers. She also is creating a Handbook and Manual for the horse program for FY05.

National Adoption Plan

Sally Spencer gave an overview of the current status of the National Adoption Program. She noted that they are working on streamlining the adoption process, making the adoption program consistent throughout the states. She indicated that the repositioning study has been completed and the results of the study are being incorporated into the plan. She noted some of the accomplishments to date: Increased use of GIS data to determine event locations, increased use of volunteers, increased partnerships with horse groups, National Office coordination with adoption promotion activities with state offices, aiding with advertising and promotional material, a website with contact information pertaining to veterinarians and farriers, and the Wild Horse and Burro Newsletter posted on the website within the next two weeks, and 5,000 adoptions packets with animal health care brochures to be given out at adoptions.

The Board would like to know why the costs of Nevada adoptions are high. Should Nevada have their own corral to hold adoptions? Robin Lohnes asked what percentages of horses are adopted at the Warm Springs facility are BLM horses. It was 50%. On behalf of the Board, Robin requested a cost analysis for the state of Nevada for their adoptions.

Dean Bolstad spoke about the changes at Palomino Valley Adoption Center in Sparks, Nevada. John Neil has been appointed as the new manager as of the end of November 2004. The Assistant Manager position is vacated and John Neil has restructured the position to include emphasis on the adoption program, including regular duty hours on Saturdays, 8am to noon, in order to service adopters. The position will also entail giving educational seminars and organizing a volunteer structure for Palomino Valley and the Carson City area. The Center is establishing a partnership with the Nevada BLM and plans to develop a website for Palomino Valley Center featuring animals and volunteering information. The Board expressed their appreciation and commended John's efforts.

Repositioning Plan

Sally introduced Carol Alm, Executive Director, National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation. She in turn introduced John Falen who is a member of the Foundation Board. Repositioning objectives are 1) make the horse more marketable; 2) improve and enhance perception of mustangs; 3) establish and create awareness of education, volunteering and philanthropic opportunities within the horse industry and business community for both mustangs and wild horses; 4) organize and support a community of mustang owners and enthusiasts.

Wrangler research data indicates people are emphasizing the west less and placing more emphasis on heritage, freedom, spirit and resilience. The mustang could be a symbol for all this as opposed to a living legend. Perception is that there are two products "Wild Horses" (unadoptable) and "Mustangs" (adoptable) each with a complete different market.

The Foundation is considering a name change. It was noted that their mission will remain the same, tag line will look different. The Foundation is also in the process of hiring a grant writer. Mr. Falen spoke briefly to the Board emphasizing BLM keep the adoptions separate from sale authority. Once the Foundation issues a report to BLM, the Board would like to receive a copy.

Also, the Board requested further clarification of the difference between “Wild Horse” vs. “Mustang”.

During the discussion, there was a suggestion to develop a score card for each horse prior to sending them to adoptions. The marketing budget for FY05 is \$450,000 for promotional events to adopt 7,150 animals. Robin Lohnes inquired about the adoption success for FY05. Is there an expectation that there will be an increase of adoptions? Jeff Rawson stated it will be determined during the mid-year review.

Reduced Adoption Fee

Dean Bolstad spoke about the draft instruction memorandum concerning Wild Horse and Burro Reduced Adoption Fee Standards. The Board asked if the compliance checks for the animals, which were sold at an earlier date, has been increased? The Board was concerned that the reduced fee might impact the adoption system. Sally Spencer said that it may or may not impact the adoption system. Carol Alm, from the National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation, noted that reduced fees run counter to developing the “Mustang”. The Buddy system relates to the “Wild Horse” not the “Mustang”. Discussion developed about the value and promotion of the horses at adoptions.

A reduced fee for the burros gives the perception that BLM is giving the burro away. Jacks, 5 years and older, are usually written off by adopting at the reduced fee. If the jacks were shipped to a different area, they could be adopted for more dollars. The demand for the jacks is in the East where they can be adopted at a greater cost. Transportation of burros to Eastern States or other areas raises concerns.

Discussion turned to compliance checks – how they are carried out and by whom, and how adopters were notified. It was noted that compliance checks are not consistent from state-to-state. It was stated that advance notice is usually given for compliance checks. The Board will be making a recommendation pertaining to the reduced fees as messages seemed contradictory between Foundation and BLM.

Senator Harry Reid, Nevada, wrote a letter to Kathleen Clarke, BLM Director, expressing his concerns and recommended the following actions: 1) Waive the \$125 adoption fee for wild horses and burros. 2) Raise the number of horses that approved adopters can take during a calendar year. 3) Revisit the recommendations contained in the “National Marketing Plan for the BLM’s Wild Horse and Burro Program” submitted by Fleishman-Hillard, Inc., on January 12, 2001. Dean Bolstad stated that qualified individuals can adopt up to four animals per year by filing an application to adopt. An inspection of the adopter’s facility is required when an adopter desires to adopt more than 4 or will have more than 4 untitled animals at their facility.

CA Volunteer Pilot Project

Janet Neal gave a presentation of the California Volunteer Pilot Project. The project is between the National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation and the Bureau of Land Management. She gave

a detailed discussion of the on-the-ground operation of the volunteer program in California. \$10,000 was obligated for this project. She spoke of the dedication of the people and their skillfulness and eagerness to help in this project. An evaluation process is built in through the internal website. Janet Neal distributed the position descriptions that will be used for volunteers. The Board commended Janet Neal for her efforts on this project.

Appropriate Management Levels (AML)

Dean Bolstad spoke about the status of appropriate management level establishment in each state. The Board requested an update from Nevada on the Herd Management Areas (HMAs) for establishing AML for the 13 that have not been completed.

New Legislation

Jeff Rawson spoke about the new legislation passed referencing the text of the new Wild Horse and Burro Sale-Authority Law (Fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act – PL 108-447, Division E, Section 142). BLM estimates that about 8,400 animals are affected by this new law. BLM's intent is to find good homes for the animals. The horses that will be for sale will have a single U brand added to the current freemark. Don Glenn spoke about BLM's progress on the Sale-Authority Law. As of this date, 220 horses have been sold (including 13 to Life Savers in California; 1 of which was a repossessed horse that was already being taken care of in Grand Junction, CO). The prices of the horses are negotiable. The Board commended the BLM for trying to do the right thing from the start. BLM has kept in touch with the advocacy groups pertaining to sale authority and thereby has improved communications. The monies received from the sale of the animals will be deposited in a separate account and be utilized in the adoption program. Two new accounts have been established: one for deposits (1061) and one for expenditures (1062). Expenses to conduct sales come out of the existing budget. The Board expressed their concern that BLM needs to concentrate on the big picture and not overlook the adoption process. Jeff assured the Board that BLM is still focusing on the adoption program and they are not considering any new long-term holding facilities in the future. There are two holding facilities going up for re-bid. They will only be set up for 1 year with flexibility up to 4 years. BLM is focusing on cost-efficiency.

Selective Removal

Dean Bolstad spoke to the Board about changes that have been discussed concerning the selective removal policy and compared existing policy to changes being contemplated.

Basics of Existing Policy

- 1st priority - Remove 5 years & younger
- 2nd priority - Remove 10 years & older
- Leave 6-9 year olds on the range; remove some from this age category when necessary to achieve AML

Policy Changes Contemplated:

- 1st - Remove 6 years & younger
- Remove 7-19 year olds if AML can't be achieved by removal of younger animals
- Leave 20 years and older on the range.
- Some representatives of all age classes left on the range.
- The bottom line and focus is to maintain healthy sustainable herds on the range after gathers are completed.

Sale Implementation Policy

Dean Bolstad presented a summary of new policy that BLM has issued to implement the new sale authority legislation. Questions arose concerning the budget impact of sales, and it was stated that it would be easier to assess next month during the midyear budget review. A discussion arose about the vaccinations and boosting for sale animals at the long-term holding facilities. It was noted that the animals in long-term holding will not be vaccinated. It requires more holding time and the facilities are not set up to handle this. The Board commended BLM for trying to anticipate problems during this process.

Follow-up Discussion

The issue of "Mustang" and "Wild Horse" was discussed again. The Board would like to further consider the impact of these designations of mustang and wild horse on the program and mustang registration.

There was a discussion of the herd reproduction rates and the national level AML projections based on these rates. There is a realization that rates vary among the herds in each state. The Board requested that BLM clarify the definition of recruitment and reproduction rates for each state to ensure consistent figures among the states. The Board asked when BLM will see a result in fertility control. Concerning population based trials, BLM will start to monitor and observe the effects of the winter 2003-2004 treatments after the 2005 foaling season. Aerial survey along with on-the-ground monitoring will be conducted after the foaling season.

The Board discussed the next meeting date and site. They would like to have three meetings in 2005, reverting back to quarterly meetings. The next meeting may be May 16th or May 23, 2005 (with 2 day meeting); August 29, 2005 (Monday); and November 7, 2005. The Board would like BLM to check out adoption events back East in May and gathers in Nevada for August.

Meeting adjourned.

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Recommendations

Boise, Idaho

March 14, 2005

1. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board acknowledges sale authority and complements the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for its efforts in implementation; the Board recommends the BLM stay on course and incorporate sale authority to ensure its implementation is not at the expense of the rest of the Wild Horse and Burro Program.
2. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends BLM pilot the proposed amended selective removal policy during the gathers from July 1, 2005 through February 28, 2006. The pilot should include gathering and analyzing data as to the effectiveness of the effort and adjusting the policy as necessary. BLM should conduct a preliminary analysis at the end of the fiscal year and adjust the policy as appropriate.
3. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommended changes in the proposed Wild Horse and Burro Reduced Adoption Fee Schedule memo to only reflect the Buddy System (see the attachment).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

, 2005

In Reply Refer to:
4750 (WO260) P

Ref: I.M. 2005-XXX

EMS TRANSMISSION

Instruction Memorandum No. 2005-

Expires: 09/30/2006

To: All Field Officials

From: Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning

Subject: Wild Horse and Burro **Buddy System** ~~Reduced Adoption~~ Fee Standards

Program Area: Wild Horses and Burros

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum establishes guidance for discretionary use of ~~reduced adoption fees and~~ the buddy system, and mandatory compliance inspections for reduced fee animal adoptions.

The purpose ~~of reduced adoption fees and~~ the buddy system is to increase the number of animals adopted and decrease holding and transportation costs. ~~Reduced fees provide incentive for the adoption of older aged animals and animals offered at their third adoption event.~~ The buddy system rewards qualified individuals who have adopted a full fee animal(s) and reduces the number of haul-back animals from satellite adoption events. Mandatory compliance checks for ~~reduced fee animals~~ **buddy system animals** provide assurance of humane care.

Policy/Action:

The use of ~~reduced adoption fees and~~ the buddy system is not mandatory in any state or region and can be utilized at the discretion of the Authorized Officer. Managers are encouraged to use both of these tools when a greater number of animals are likely to be adopted.

~~1. Reduced Fees~~

~~Adoption fees may be reduced to as low as \$25 for:~~

- ~~• Untrained wild horses 4 to 10 years of age.~~
- ~~• Untrained jack burros including geldings that are 4 to 10 years of age.~~
- ~~• Any animal offered at its third adoption event (see adoption event definition in Instruction Memorandum 2005-XXX,).~~
- ~~• Promotion animals: Ungentle or trained animals that will generate recognition and advertisement of the adoption program.~~

1. Buddy System:

Qualified adopters who have adopted one or more full fee (\$125 or greater adoption fee) animals at a satellite adoption event are eligible at that event to adopt one additional animal at a reduced fee of \$25 that has not been adopted after two rounds of competitive bidding. The following animals will ~~not~~ be offered as buddies:

- Untrained wild horses 4 to 10 years of age.
- Untrained jack burros including geldings that are 4 to 10 years of age.
- Any animal offered at its third adoption event (see adoption event definition in Instruction Memorandum 2005-XXX,).
- ~~• Gentled/trained animals~~
- ~~• Jenny burros~~
- ~~• Jack burros younger than 4 years old~~

2. Required Compliance

All horses and burros adopted at reduced fees will receive at least one on-the-ground compliance check that is in addition to and precedes an inspection or check for title certification. These compliance checks are to be conducted 3 to 6 months after adoption. A mandatory compliance list for reduced fee animals will be distributed quarterly.

~~Adoption fees for animals initially offered for reduced fees at adoption events may be increased through competitive bidding. Reduced fee animals at short term holding facilities will be made available without competitive bidding.~~

Time Frame: This action is effective from the date of approval through September 30, 2006.

Budget Impact: Implementation of this policy will result in additional expenditures for mandatory compliance inspections. ~~Reduced adoption fees will decrease adoption fee receipts.~~ The decrease in adoption revenue may be offset by decreased holding and feeding costs if the adoptions increase. ~~because of reduced adoption fees.~~

Background: States and field offices have been challenged to increase numbers of successful adoptions. During fiscal year 2003, a buddy system pilot program was initiated in Arizona

where adopters who adopted one animal at the base adoption fee were allowed to adopt a second animal at the reduced fee of \$25 at formal adoption events. Eastern States offices also implemented the buddy system at all adoptions within their jurisdiction and a few other states have used it on an experimental basis. ~~Some offices have utilized reduced fees for horses older than 4 years, jack burros, and animals that have been to more than two adoptions. The rationale for the experimental reduced fees was to increase adoption numbers and reduce feed costs and haul backs from adoption events.~~

~~Adoption and compliance data from 2002 to 2004 was reviewed to determine if reduced fees were effective in increasing adoption numbers and if there are greater compliance problems with reduced fee adoptions. The data indicates that reduced fees influenced the adoption of greater numbers of animals in some areas and that there may be an increased non-compliance risk with reduced fee adoptions.~~

The authority and direction for the adoption of wild horses and burros is provided by Section 3(b)(2)(b) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, 43 CFR 4750 and BLM Manual Handbook 4750-2 Adoption of Wild Horses and Burros.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: Provides supplemental guidance to the Compliance Handbook 4760-1 and to Adoption Handbook 4750-2.

Coordination: ~~Reduced fee~~ policy proposals have been presented to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, Wild Horse and Burro Steering Committee and reviewed extensively by Wild Horse and Burro field personnel involved in the adoption program.

Contact: Questions concerning this policy should be directed to Dean Bolstad in the Wild Horse and Burro National Program Office at (775) 861-6611.